

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Greece, North Macedonia, Bulgaria - Sofia 2023

Speaker :

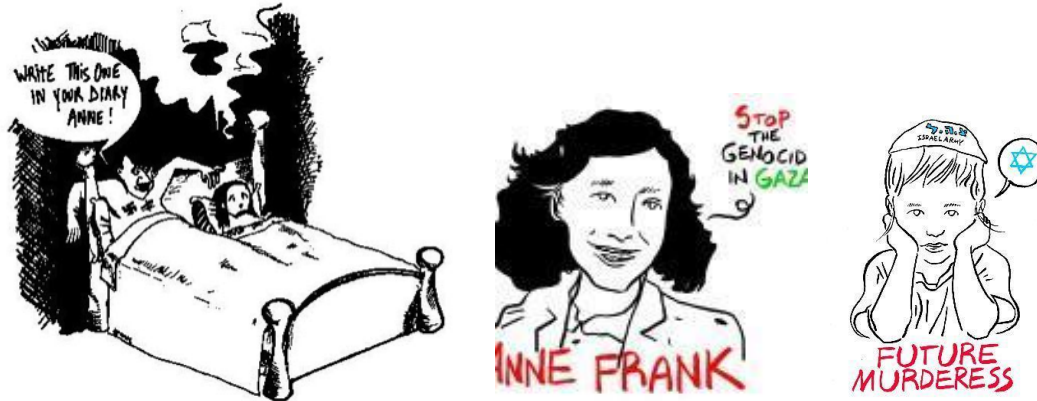
The Pitfall, the Impasse of the Shoah

Everywhere in Europe, from East to West, there is a strong desire to rehabilitate the regimes and/or national movements that were allied with the Nazi occupier. Certainly, they compromised, but all in all, for "good reasons", here, for freedom (the Baltic States against the Soviet empire), there, for their self-determination in the case of the Croats, Slovaks and Flemish people. Doesn't the end justify the means? Undoubtedly, were it not for the unbearable pitfall of the Shoah. The often-active participation of local authorities and/or nationalist movements in the process of extermination of the Jews constitutes a powerful brake, if not an insurmountable obstacle, to the process of rehabilitation of nationalist movements and leaders.

The Auschwitz Complex

How can we deny that the Shoah makes it difficult, if not impossible, to justify morally, and therefore politically, the collaboration? This wall of the Shoah and/or the Auschwitz complex explains the implementation, here and there, of avoidance strategies intended to reduce the weight of the fault. One thinks of the mechanisms of *rejection of guilt* and/or *aggressive projection* put forward by the Judeo-German philosopher Theodor Adorno. One thinks again of the concept of *cognitive dissonance* revealed by the Judeo-American psychologist Leon Festinger and, finally, of the notion of *secondary anti-Semitism* brought to light in the 1960s by the German psychosociologist Peter Schönbach. What do these concepts describe, if not strategies for denying reality, for attenuating and overcoming the Auschwitz complex that has haunted the German consciousness since 1945? To accept Bruno Quélenec's brilliant analysis, let us recall that Schönbach insists on the question of the intergenerational transmission of prejudices, through the figure of the father whose children wish to keep a "pure" image, while Adorno describes a similar mechanism that focuses rather on the relationship of the individual to the group or to the fatherland. For both researchers, the various, largely unconscious "strategies" of self-disculpation, whether familial, societal, or national, are not necessarily correlated with detestation of Jews as such. These avoidance mechanisms, which could be defined as "*aggressive self-defense*", find their primary explanation in the fierce desire to preserve the image of the family, the group, the nation at all costs. Everything is obviously based on an unavowable guilt complex, brilliantly summed up by the shocking formula attributed to the Israeli-Viennese psychoanalyst, Zvi Rix, "*The Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz*". This so-called secondary anti-Semitism, not "*in spite of, but because of Auschwitz*", is very enlightening for those who want to understand the roots of contemporary anti-Semitism, including (and especially) in its anti-Zionist metastases. Latent guilt and nationalism are thus the two necessary conditions for the expression of denial in all its forms, from the hardest (absolute denial) to the softest and most perverse (distortion). The concept of distortion of the Shoah, recently put forward by

the intergovernmental organization International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), describes the mechanisms intended not so much to deny the crime as to relativize it, to trivialize it, to excuse the executioners and, even more so, to charge, sully, and make the victims feel guilty. The idea is as much to minimize the criminal character of the Shoah as to Nazify the Jews through a radical criticism of Israel. Not only did the Jews not suffer such a particular martyrdom, but they are today, in Palestine, the real Nazis.



The iconic figure of Anne Frank is used both to trivialize the Shoah, and even to laugh about it (a cartoon published by the Belgian-Lebanese activist Abu Jahjah in 2006) and to Nazify Israel (a drawing by the Italian Gianluca Costantini to “celebrate” the 70th anniversary of the Jewish state). All is said.